

CLAIMS

1. Rescue vessel for vessels, characterized in that its hull delimits an elongated basin (12, 26) of at least 150 m in length and 30 m in width, and it comprises a ballast device that makes it possible to alter the vessel's draft by at least 15 m.
2. Rescue vessel according to claim 1, wherein basin (12, 26) has a length of at least 250 m and a width of at least 45 m, and the draft alteration can reach at most 20 m.
3. Rescue vessel according to one of claims 1 and 2, wherein the hull comprises two lateral hulls that can be ballasted (14) and that surround basin (12), and the stern has a virtually sealed door (18) that can close the rear of basin (12).
4. Rescue vessel according to claim 3, wherein the door that can close the rear of the basin comprises two flaps that each comprise two parts that are articulated together around a vertical axis that is designed to work with the vertical axis of the other flap in a closed position of the door.
5. Rescue vessel according to claim 3, wherein at least one of the ends of the two articulated parts that are distant from the vertical axis is attached to the corresponding vertical side of the rear hull by a slide that can move horizontally along the internal side of the rear part of the hull.
6. Rescue vessel according to claim 3, wherein the door that can close the rear of basin (12) comprises a detachable panel (40) that can be ballasted to move from a position that is close to the bottom of the basin to an approximately vertical closing position of the rear of basin (12).

7. Rescue vessel according to one of claims 1 and 2, wherein the two port and starboard longitudinal sides (28) both have a height that is lower by at least 20 m than that of the other two delimited sides at the front and at the rear of the vessel, and their upper edge (32) that is virtually rectilinear on the largest part of its length is provided with a reinforcement.
8. Rescue vessel according to one of the preceding claims, wherein it comprises maneuvering means that are intended to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least the longitudinal axis of the vessel.
9. Process for rescuing vessels in distress with the assistance of a rescue vessel that can be ballasted (10, 24) and that has a basin (12, 26) according to any of the preceding claims, wherein it comprises
 - a first phase of movement of rescue vessel (10, 24) toward the location of the vessel in distress,
 - a second phase, executed close to the vessel in distress, of ballasting rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the keel of the vessel in distress, and
 - a third phase for introducing the vessel in distress into basin (12, 26), and
 - a fourth phase of putting the upper edge of basin (12, 26) above sea level.
10. Application of a rescue vessel (10, 24) according to any of claims 1 to 8 with transport of bulky structures that are selected from among the vessels and parts of vessels, the drilling or production platforms, and the parts of such platforms, and the marine farming modules at sea.